

[Whole No. 273.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13. 1873.

Subject: How Goes the Battle?

# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



New York:

J. B. FORD AND COMPANY.

(27 PARK PLACE, AND 24 AND 26 MURRAY STREET.)  
1873.

AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY, AGENTS FOR THE TRADE.  
European Agents, Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Crown Buildings,  
188 Fleet Street, London. Sold by all Carriers and News Dealers.

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Brooklyn, January, 1869.

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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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## HOW GOES THE BATTLE?

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"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."—  
Matt. xi. 12.

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The kingdom of heaven, as applied to individuals, is the absolute predominance in the soul of each man, or, as applied to the world, the absolute reign, in mankind, of the superior faculties—the intellect, with the moral and spiritual elements.

God governs men by the use of their own nature. It is through those parts of the soul which are most like his own nature, and nearest to it, that he governs. When that part of the human soul which represents most nearly the divine thought and the divine sentiment is in the ascendancy in the individual to such an extent that it controls the social and civic and national life, the kingdom of heaven has begun; and when the superior nature of man dominates entirely his inferior nature, the kingdom of heaven on earth is consummated.

The human soul is a collection of forces, a great many of them, very different in kind, susceptible of co-ordination, therefore of subordination, and so of harmony and peace. This subordination and harmonization of the several faculties in the human soul is the moral meaning of life. It is the end for which we were sent into the world. It is the doing of this that is in the largest sense education.

I do not propose to consider this in its relation to the individual. If we were to ask, What is the progress of the kingdom of God in the individual heart according to this



psychological view? such an inquiry would not be to ask for technical experiences and hopes: it would be to ask, What is in each individual the relative distribution of force among his faculties? It would be to ask, Which side of his nature is strongest, and growing stronger? It would be to ask, What are the parts in him which predominate and govern? It would be to ask, "To what degree has his superior nature gained control over all the rest? These are the evidences of piety that would belong to the new philosophic school, including in them, of course, all that the old tests used to mean, and a great deal more that they reached out after, but that the time had not come for them to apply.

I propose this same view in regard to the world's condition, and in regard to the life and state of nations.

What is the distribution of force? What has been gained? How does the conflict stand? The kingdom of heaven is to suffer violence—that is to say, the whole development, the great conflict, by which the superior nature of man shall rise into ascendancy over his lower and inferior nature, is going on, and has been going on long, as applied to the races and the earth. What is the state of that conflict to-day? Does it inspire hope, or despondency? What is the condition of the battle? Violence there is yet. As it were, the field is taken and retaken. Sometimes the flesh is in the ascendancy, and sometimes the spirit. The conflict of the physical and of the spiritual is going on all around the globe, every day, in the individual, in households, in neighborhoods, in states, in nations, and in the whole race. It is a perpetual battle that will not end till the sun stands a thousand years in the firmament.

The animal man refuses to be broken into the intelligent moral-minded man; and these conflicts take on the proportion of the globe. They are represented in laws, in institutions, in governments, in policies, in business. The whole inward and outward history of society is but a history of this conflict. Whatever belongs to society as distinguished from the physical globe is the incarnation of the human soul; and all laws, and industries, and customs, and habits, and tendencies, are but the human soul walking outside of itself in

the guise of exterior institutions, of things representing soul-forces developed into industries, and families, and institutions, and laws, and customs. The whole work of life and its contests but represent what man has thought, felt, wished, done; and its perfectnesses represent more or less the advance of the struggles which are going on between the animal man and the spiritual man.

It is worth our while, even in a cursory and superficial manner, on such a day as this, to inquire, What is the state of this conflict? Is the kingdom of heaven, on the whole, gaining in the world, or is it losing? Are the nobler faculties of man, on the whole, gaining ascendancy, or are they losing power?

First, is the sum total of the forces of the race gaining, or losing? There has been a vague impression—and at some times it has assumed a definite form of statement—that the early races were far stronger, far wiser, and far happier than the subsequent and the present ones. It has been supposed that on the whole a gradual process of degeneration has been going on. I need not say that the arguments employed to substantiate that theory are myths—that that whole history is a fable. I aver that there never has been a time in the history of the race, so far as history can reveal any light to us, in which the generating power of the brain was so great as it is to-day. There never has been a time when man, as a thinking, willing, executive creature, was so potential as he is to-day. I am not speaking of whether his development is of a higher or a lower kind; but I say that the brain of man is a far more powerful instrument, taking the race throughout the world, to-day, than it ever was before. It throws out more forces, and is developing greater effects, than it ever did before.

If you examine barbarous nations, you will find that they stand where they always did—and they do not come into the question; but if you examine civilized nations, it will be found that there are more of them, that they are spread over a larger portion of the globe, and that the civilized or educated brain of the world is a thousand times more fruitful than it ever was before. Not that there have not been, from

the earliest days, single men who were superior ; but the distinctive peculiarity of the growth of our times is, that whereas now and then in antiquity, before the advent of Christ, there were solitary cases, single men, individuals growing alone, as it were, pasture-oaks that had been nourished all around by the free access of sun and air, and taking proportions that have scarcely been matched or equaled since, that which used to consummate itself in single men at the expense of all the rest of the community is now being diffused throughout the whole community ; and though here and there is an individual who is great, such instances are, comparatively speaking, few, because the community itself has grown so wide and so broad and so strong.

If the Alleghanies could only be approached upon a level from the point at which we stand, they would lift themselves up into the air with a height that would appal us ; but as we go to the Alleghanies by gradual ascent, hill after hill, till the summit is reached, before we think, we have gone over the mountains. The outlying lands on either side have been lifted up so much that the center peak does not show how tall it is.

If you raise the average of society around about philosophers, and priests, and kings, and great men, it will seem as though they were not so high, after all. We judge of the relative power of the old heroes and men of renown under an illusion. The community itself has gone so high now that no man in it seems so great as those whom we read of in history. They seem great, not only because they really were great, but also because comparison made them great. They were magnified. We see them in almost, I may say, mythical proportions. But if we look through the civilized nations, how vastly increased do we find to be the number of those who exert moral power, and who are forces in the State and in the human race ! It cannot be doubted, I think, that, while in barbarous nations the productive power is the same that it ever has been, yet in all civilized nations the productive power is increased to an incredible extent, and the force of the human brain is enormously augmented.

Then next, and more important, is the question, "What



is the relative distribution of the mind-forces in the civilized globe?" I have said that there is more of it; that it means more; and that it is more sensitive and more productive. Now, where is its productiveness? Is it at the bottom or at the top? Is it bringing out thorns and thistles and weeds to torment the husbandman, or is it bringing out the pleasant fruits of righteousness to reward him? Which side of the human mind is most productive? Has there been a change? and if so, is that change prophetic of a better future?

The primary question, then, is, What is the world's condition as to the proportion between physical and passional force on the one side, and moral and intellectual force on the other? Once, physical and passional force, as represented by fear, or superstition, or what not, simple or in various combinations, ruled the individual, the State, and the whole religious development of the race.

There is a distinct representation of these asseverations in history to the time of Christ, and also developed long after it. It must be said that down to within comparatively a few hundred years, the bottom-force, the curse of the world, was physical force, latent, but potential; or, more frequently, and more largely, overt and active; it has been the all-controlling power of the brain working through the physical, and for physical purposes, that has characterized the earlier developments not only in civilization, but even after Christianity began to be a struggling influence among the races of men. This wrought upon the individual. It wrought upon his relations to the State, which was an arbitrary, an absolute, an exact, and a despotic force, reared up in the midst of the people, around about which were moral influences, but which bore about the same relation to them that the stones of a fortification do to the vines and grasses that grow upon them.

Now, physical force, in all its forms, is tending to be subordinated to mind-force. I should be sorry to think that the basilar forces of human nature were being weakened. I need not say how much I disagree with the poetry, or, if you choose to call it so, the philosophy, which teaches that men ought to crucify, in any literal sense, their appetites and passions. Such a bad name have these unrestrained and unedu-

cated forces gained among men, that it seems singular to hear a minister declare that the very substratum and foundation on which we hope to build the better race, is in the energy and productive power of the passions and appetites of human nature ; but you are to remember that there is an analogical condition in the moral world to that which has been discovered and developed in the physical world—namely, the correlation and conservation of forces. We have learned, lately, that there is no substantial destruction of any force, whether it be heat, or light, or magnetism, or motion. None of them can be destroyed. You can convert one of them into another, and they can be made to run the round of the circle ; but that is all you can do with them.

And so it is with the cerebral forces of men. There is such a thing as conservation and substitution as applied to them. The appetites and the passions can be converted, and can be substituted—in other words, they can be turned into social forces and moral forces ; and they reappear in conscience, in benevolence, in reason, and in the moral sentiments, giving to them color, flavor, and power by which they draw the sum-total of human enginery behind them. This is going on now.

Men are, and ought to be, broad at the base of the head. Men whose heads are built like a ladder, small at the bottom and small at the top, with no breadth at the base, are forever apparently about to be something that they never are, and about to do something that they never do—casting the shadow of good things that never come ! On the other hand, men who have power at the bottom—provided it is by conservation and correlation transmuted into something other than physical, so that it becomes social and moral and intellectual—they are the men who give to us our ideal conceptions of manhood itself. This, certainly, is now going on.

Force, happily, is not decreased : it would be a calamity, as I have said, if it were ; but it is applied far more than ever to the subjugation of physical nature ; to the production of new external elements of life ; and within men it is more and more turned into energy of thought, energy of will, energy of moral sentiment, and energy of Christian civilization. All



ideas, all discoveries, in the magnificent train of modern civilization, are tending to take on economic forms for man's use. The intellect, which never was so active, was never so universally active. It never had such co-operative power for creating a perfect atmosphere, which stimulates the average intelligence of man, and which is, therefore, so productive of thoughts and discoveries and universal intellectual fruits as now, working not simply for matter, but through matter, to dominate matter; and dominating matter for the purpose of creating social comfort; and creating social comfort for the sake of raising the moral stature of the individual man; and raising the stature of the individual man for the sake of producing a better race—better nations and a better globe. All abstract principles, like laws in nature, fly in the air until somebody can catch them and bring them down to fixed work. Abstract principles are like rivers in the wilderness, flowing night and day with power, but turning no mill. They come from the sea, they fall on the mountain, they run down through their channels back to the sea. Round and round they go in this perpetual circuit, doing nothing until civilization stops the water, and pours it over the wheel, and says, "Work for your living." Then these forces begin to be productive.

Abstract ideas, and the abstract conception of natural laws, are the same. They do a certain amount of work. But when, by-and-by, philosophers, architects of ideas, begin to open up great natural laws to the apprehension of men, and so make the individual larger, stronger, and better, and make the family better, and society better, and the race better, then these wild colts of the air are harnessed and broken to industry, and men's souls ride them. This work was never going on so fast before as it is going on now. Never was it going on so widely. Never was it going on so obviously in the stream of Divine influences.

There are three grand elements by which we may ascertain the direction, gauge the depth, and measure the speed of that grand world-current which men may call by what name they please, but which I call *the evolution of the human race under the divine inspiration*.

Whether, on the whole, human society is slowly coming to a state in which the reason and the moral sentiments are predominating over passion and the physical forces is a question which concerns and interests every single man. How is it, then, with civil governments? Has that predominance of the higher nature which we note in individuals, and which characterizes households and portions of the community, gone on in men generically, and in governments? Are governments to-day better or worse, on the whole, than they were before, or at the time of Christ? Better, better, *immeasurably* better! They are growing less dynastic. They are, of necessity, introducing more and more of the popular element. But what is the introduction of the popular element? It is the substitution of universal well-being as determined by the wisdom and experience of the race, rather than dynastic habit and dynastic will. The thought of the race about itself is appearing in government, and not in a few men at the top of government determining the race-condition. The thinking-power and the will-power of *mankind* is beginning to control government, instead of force directed by a few.

This statement has many relations; but the point is, that universal sentiment has begun to develop the soul-force of the race. Heart-wants are modifying dynastic ideas and aristocratic absolutism. These were once substantially directed by force, and were maintained by the ascendancy of force. Now there has come about them the solvent power of thoughts. Now the cry of trouble is beginning to be felt as a political power. Now the soul's mourning is beginning to be heard in the Cabinet. Now what men want for their higher selves is beginning to be debated in legislation. Now men that are armed and fighting are fighting for ideas rather than for things. There has been a vast transition. A huge desert has been crossed to bring nations and the race to this position.

So, also, if you look, not alone at the form and nature of governments, but at the conduct of nations toward nations, at the interchange of conduct, and national law, and national morality and national intercourse, it will be found that precisely the same tendencies are developed there. The basilar force is commuted into a higher form

of intellectual, moral and social force. And the policy or intercourse of nations is coming to stand upon a higher level, and to be not only the fruit, but the seed again, of the reinforcement of man's spiritual nature. It was the moral influence of the great thinking body of citizens on the two sides of the ocean that prevented the precipitation of the mother and the daughter into a cruel and needless war.

If any one asks me, "Where are the mile-stones set up that mark plainly the distance which has been traveled?" I point to our old colonial times, and to what our fathers suffered under the despotism of the mother country, when Chatham declared that the colonies were to be mere tenders to the home-government; when it was declared by this great man that there ought not to be allowed so much manufacturing in the colonies as to make a hobnail; when it was forbidden that men should appropriate their own streams to run mills without permission from Great Britain; when the British government forbade men to cut the timber of their forests without Her Majesty's permission; when the knowledge that we made hats in this country came near producing a revolution in Great Britain. That long, hard physical government passed away with the Revolution, which was as much a commercial as it was a military war; which was a battle for political liberty, in order that commercial liberty might be obtained. Such was the motive of government and rebellion as far down as that.

Come down to 1812, when another war was waged, not because we were restrained in manufacturing or invaded in our territories, but because the rights of our citizens under the American flag were violated. We went to war on that issue; and it was a very much higher war than any which had preceded it. That which we opposed was the obstruction of individual right. The right of an American citizen had become an entity. It was something definite. It was worthy of a policy, and worthy, also, of the whole power of public sentiment and of the national arms.

Come down to a still later period—to our great civil conflict for the liberty of the common man; for the liberty of labor; for the liberty of humanity to sprout and grow un-



checked by law or institution ; for the liberty of a great nation to purge itself of elements which were mutually contradictory and destructive. When that great conflict was pending in our death struggle ; when the balances hung even ; when if ever friendship meant life ; when if ever to be betrayed, or to have one straw more put on our back than we were bearing, seemed the height of cruelty ; when millions of our sons were in the field, and the government was strained to the extremest tension, and every man's heart was perpetually in his mouth, amidst blood, and graves, and battles and sorrows—then, I will not say that there were technical wrongs inflicted on this country by our brethren across the water ; but there was the cold, chilling shadow of unsympathizing hearts thrown over us ; and there was a broken relation of comity ; and if ever a nation might have said, “ We now have five hundred thousand veteran men in the field, and we have an abundance of ships of war afloat, and we will vindicate ourselves on the sea and land,” this nation might have said it. But what did the conscience and heart and intelligence of this nation do ? It laid down its wrongs and grievances at the feet of well-appointed arbiters, and said, “ Let *us* not settle our rights : judge you between us.” And in the work of that sublime arbitration I think you mark one of the progresses of this world. It bore witness not only that England and America had settled difficulties without war, but that the time had come when force must go under, the conscience being in the ascendant, and that we were beginning a new era on a higher plane.

Nor need I point out how, recently, after the first effervescence of the feeling of horror which filled the community at the barbarities on a neighboring island, against whose cruelties and oppressions every sentiment of our souls is set, and shall be, with our strong sympathy for the men in the interior ; I need not tell you how, while we were standing up for their liberty, as against the cruelty, barbaric and hideous, which is inflicted upon them—how, when it came to the question of *war*, the nation stopped, and balanced its reason on its conscience, and said, “ Let not force arbitrate ; let this question be settled by men's higher nature if possible ; and only at

length and at last let us bring the sword into the settlement of this great question." It is a noble pause, it is a noble patience, and it argues the great growth of the superior faculties in this nation over the basilar, the inferior, the physical, the forceful faculties.

But it may be said that while there may have been some advance in civic, commercial, social and political affairs, there are no such hopeful prospects in the direction of religious life. In reply to that, I declare that we see the subsidence of the animal passions in religion as much as anywhere else. Alas ! man striving to be religious has on every side presented, I think, the most piteous spectacle of time. Methinks if God weeps ever, it is when he beholds the poor staggering steps and faint endeavors which have been made, and are still being made, by men to emancipate themselves from the animal, and to come up by their own evolution and patience and power into the state of the angel. To cease being physical and to become spiritual, as a drama—often as a comedy, but more often as a tragedy—has been going on for thousands of years. We have seen how, directly or indirectly, men have been forced to their religion by fear ; how, when they had once come under the yoke and bondage of the priest and the government, they were maintained in their religion by the sword ; and what wastes, what cruelties, there have been, no man can tell—not until the pictorial judgment comes, and we stand looking down through the past of history to see the line of mourners, of martyrs, of murdered ones, of mothers and children, of the long crowd that have suffered because the devil of force entered into the church and dominated religion. Not till then shall we ever have any conception of what the world has gone through in this respect.

Now, has there been a lighting up ? Has there been progress ? Has this infernal devil been in any manner exorcised ? Has he so far been exorcised that the church lies, at last, wallowing on the ground, foaming at the mouth, and waiting for the final sentence, "Depart out of her" ? I hold that more and more is religion discussed and controversies are carried on with regard to it, not as a dynastic element, but as an individual condition. The conception of the church as

an organized power has been the curse of Christendom—with your liberty I say it. I declare that while religion has been full of justice, while it has been a plenary humanity, while it has been God's benison to this world, the framework and enginery which men have built up as a receptacle and a means by which the religious spirit should exert itself, has been not only the world's curse but the world's desolation. It has been the spirit of religion that has always stood, saying, "Let the captive go!" It has been the institutions of religion that have been conservative, and that have said, "Pause, calculate, hold back." It has been the spirit of religion that has said to laboring-men, "Ye are free!" it has been the mitred priest, it has been the glittering and organized church, that has stood in state panoply, and said, "Obey—obedience is better than sacrifice." It has been the spirit of the Bible to open prison-doors, and to bring forth captives; but the captives of the last two thousand years have found their way towards liberty blocked up with ramparts; and as they have drawn near to them, they have found that these ramparts themselves were made of piled-up Bibles; and out from the port-holes have been rammed ecclesiastical cannon. Fire, desolation and destruction have come from churches and the ecclesiastical use of Bibles to keep men in oppression, and to hold them down like beasts of burden.

Now, I say it is a sign of great hope that this vast enginery and exterior machinery, partly state and partly church, which has borne authority by which to oppress and dominate men, is toppling to its downfall. Do you call this the decay of religious institutions throughout the world? Decay! it is God's plow ripping up old pasture-sod, and getting ready to sow the seeds of righteousness. It is such decay as spring loves, by which all previous growths have rotted and gone to miasm, and have returned to assist in producing a new, a better and a more wholesome growth.

But still further, I remark that the discussions that are going on, aside from this dynastic revolution on the subject of religion, if looked at from a large philosophical standpoint, will show that men are no longer regarding religion as a dynastic power, nor as a scholastic, technical and intellectual



system. They will show that the world's thought or the world's mind is running toward religion as a vital force rather than as an organized intellection. As a means of education and of reformation, it is adapting itself to the absolute wants of mankind, and is daily growing in importance. Religion is a great power, out of which cunning hands had stolen from heaven the celestial fire, that the altar of a pretended religion might be the means of welding chains and forging swords and spears to oppress men with. This is all past; and now men are beginning to ask, "What can the Spirit of love manifested by the sacrifice of Christ do for us?" What can it do for the poor? What can it do for all the crying wants of mankind? There is a growing tendency to unity of feeling, therefore, for justice. So soon as religion becomes love and benevolence, you cannot keep men apart.

You shall put on the same fire a stick of hickory, a stick of oak, a stick of pine, a stick of maple, a stick of mahogany, and a stick of ebony; and as long as they lie in cold juxtaposition each one will retain its nature, as oak, or pine, or maple, or what not; but once kindle a fire under them, and they will all begin to burn; and, burning, they will take on the form of flame; and in the flame there will be neither pine, nor maple, nor oak, but a common fire.

All over the world, so long as religion consisted of dead institutions, or dead institutions pretended to be religion; so long as priests walked up and down the earth claiming supernatural power, and professing to wield it; so long as men fought for abstractions, and called abstract doctrines religion, or held them up as indispensable to religion—so long there could be no unity; the sticks lay dead in the old fire-place, or on the altar; but just as soon as the concurrent feelings of mankind begin jointly to look upon religion as love to God and love to man—just as soon as the common feeling is goodwill—the sticks will begin to burn; and the moment they begin to burn, nothing in God's universe can stop their coming together; and this feeling is that which is forging unity.

I know there are many who mourn, just now, over the reactions of religion, and the tendencies of science. I am not

one of them. I see nothing to regret. There is, no doubt, a reaction of religion as represented by organizations and forms and ceremonies ; there is very likely a falling off in religion so far as its ecclesiastical machinery is concerned ; but I would as soon cry because the leaves drop off from the white oak in spring as to cry for that. There are, however, those who know religion only in its arbitrary and external delineations ; and I do not wonder that they mourn. If I were a working-man, to-day, in Germany or in France ; if I were a working-man in Italy or Spain, where the Papal rule has been predominant ; if I had only the intelligence which God has given me, only the natural instincts of manhood, and only the yearnings of an uncultured human heart, and I dwelt a poor man in those countries, I should be an infidel. My heart would revolt at what is imposed on men there as religion. If you interpret the New Testament so that it shall lead to the treading down of the poor ; so that it shall sanction tyranny ; so that it shall recognize no religion except that which the priest gives ; so that individualism is discouraged ; so that personal liberty is denied ; so that all aspirations and generous sentiments in the human soul are crushed out ; so that every inspiration of truth and justice and purity is trampled upon—if you interpret the New Testament thus, I do not wonder that men reject it. I honor men who tread under foot that which claims to be religion when it is nothing but the offspring of the devil in the guise of an angel of light. But if you call the spirit of those men who are seeking for a knowledge of the moral government of God over this world ; of those men who rejoicingly find that there is a revelation of God in the physical globe besides that of the letter, which is worth reading ; of those who believe that there is a disclosure of the divine method and will in the unfolding of human society, which it is well to understand—not casting away the history of the ancients so far as it is good ; of those who believe that there is a revelation going on all the time, everywhere, and that it behooves each large and generous man who feels the need of manhood and immortality to have an eye and an ear open to every source of information—if you call that spirit a spirit of infidelity, then

I am an infidel, and I would to God that you were too ! Nay, I take it that, while there have been transitional periods, that while there have been incidental and temporary reactions from various causes, and while there has been much to be deprecated and combated, yet there has been a steady advance upward. The general tone of conscience among scientific men is in the right direction. They are committing themselves to the ground that truth is to be received when the evidences are present, no matter where it leads a man. I am willing to accept the issue on that ground. I am willing to rest my faith in Christianity upon it. For I declare that you shall find no delineation of man's character, no exposition of man's relations, nothing which shows how the human soul may grow up from an animal into a man in Christ Jesus, no presentation of the reasons why one may hope to live beyond the dark horizon of death, no representation of the way in which we may supplement our conscious weakness by the power of the Everlasting, like the Gospel. I put the cross of Christ, when it is stripped of its fabulous meanings, when it is divested of its crooked philosophy, when it is merely a symbol manifesting to the world the precious truth that God does not govern to destroy, but would rather suffer than make suffering—I put the cross of Christ, under such circumstances, against anything and everything else. Give me Christ, give me Calvary, give me the Gospel, and I am not afraid to face the world, and say, “Try it with your alembic, try it with your mathematics, try it with your spy-glass, try it with your microscope, try it as you please, and in the end you will find that it is the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation.

It is said by religious technicalists of our day that this preaching religion as a power rather than as a doctrine is a sentimental philanthropy instead of a Gospel. What was it, then, that the angels sang when they announced the coming of Christ ?

“Peace on earth, good will to men.”

The old theologian turns round, and says, “Go back to heaven, you sentimental singers.” When the Master stood in Nazareth, and declared the Scripture to be fulfilled in re-



spect to himself, what was it that constituted the fulfillment of Scripture in his case ?

“Jesus returned in the power of the spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*”

Oh, what sentimentalism is this ! Where is the doctrine of decrees, of election and of fore-ordination ? There is nothing in this but sentiment !

“When John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another ? Jesus answered, and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see.”

He said nothing to them about the Catechism, or Confessions of Faith, or anything of that sort. He said :

“Go, and show John again those things which you do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.”

Was Christ a mere sentimentalist, that we can afford to make such unworthy flings ?

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and before him shall be gathered all nations, what shall be the test by which he will judge men ? Will he say to them, “Dost thou believe in the tri-personality of the Godhead ?” Will he say, “Dost thou believe in the doctrinal divinity of Christ ?” Will he say, “Dost thou believe in the vicarious suffering of Christ ?” In the 25th chapter of Matthew it is declared what the test question shall be.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him,

saying, Lord, when saw we thee a hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Behind the poorest soul that trembles in poverty on the face of the globe stands the heart of the Everlasting God, saying, "Deal by this man as you please, but remember that you deal so by me." And it is this philanthropy, this sympathy, this direct, potential force of religion, as a vital influence, transforming the human soul, that is characterizing modern preaching, and modifying technical religion; and if this is sentimentalism, it is the sentimentalism of the Lord Jesus Christ and of heaven; and I glory in it.

\* The kingdom of heaven is suffering violence. The great battle is going on between the lower and the upper manhood—between the power of the flesh and selfishness, and the power of the Spirit and true beneficence; and though all the signs of the times measured by hours, may, perhaps, give no comfort, yet measured by hundreds and thousands of years they show the way in which the conflict is to end. More and more the forces of mischief are being crowded off from the field; and may God again perform a great miracle, and command the sun of time to stand still till the armies of the Lord shall have driven away the last Philistine, and raised the brotherhood of common love, regenerated in the flesh, and made powerful by the Spirit of God.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

LORD God of our fathers, we rejoice that we may come to thee, and plead thy goodness to thy servants of old, and refresh our faith and confidence in thee by remembrance of the patriarchs, of the prophets, of the apostles and of the martyrs, whom thou hast defended in life, or whom, if they have been overcome or thrown down by misfortune, thou hast made to live a thousand fold more by their trouble than by their life. Thou art the same God that walked in the East, and awaked men in the early civilization. Thou art the same God that hath ruled through all the confusion of nations, still educing good from evil. Thou art the same yesterday, to-day and forever, unchangeably wise, and unchangeably good. Thou art seeking, through a thousand channels which we know not of, thy great and glorious purpose of the final development of holiness in the race.

We rejoice that thou hast made thyself so far known that we now look no longer with doubt toward thee, but with confidence, as we look toward the sunrise. Thou, O Sun of Righteousness, hast arisen, and art ascending higher, and wilt ascend till thou shalt stand in full-orbed glory in mid-heaven, to shine a thousand years upon the earth. Our hope, our faith of mankind, is not in them but in thee, and in them through thee. We look upon the history of the race, long in reality, but short in comparison with all that is to be, so little drawn out and made known; and we find that much is not revealed to us because we are incompetent to understand the elements by which it must be revealed; and we wait, trustful and hopeful, for the time when thou shalt think it expedient to reveal it to us.

Now we render thee thanks for all the bounty and mercy of the year past, to us and to all the nations of the world. We are called hither by our Chief Magistrate, by the Governor of the State in which we dwell, and by our own welcome desires, that together we may as a people give thanks to God for all his service of bounty and mercy. Thou hast indeed caused it to rain, not blood, but plenteous drops of mercy. Though thou hast smitten somewhat among thy people, yet how sparing have been thy judgments! How small has been the ravage of disease! How hast thou hushed, rather than permitted civil discord! With what bountifulness hast thou crowned the labor of our hands! Everywhere, throughout this whole land, thou hast provided, in abundance, food for man and beast. We thank thee that even the disturbances which have interrupted the affairs of this nation have been disturbances so speedily to be repaired, and that the out-throwing of so many, the trouble of so many, bears no proportion to the bounty and goodness of the whole.

We thank thee, O Lord our God, that thou hast, not only to us in our dwellings, but to us as a church, been so gracious. We thank thee that thou hast spared so many; and that around the departing forms of those who are gone thou hast kindled such light of hope and gratitude.

We thank thee that thou hast blessed this church during the year that is passed. We thank thee that thou hast vouchsafed to it so much of peace and prosperity. And we beseech of thee that thou



wilt accept our thanksgiving for our own households; for all the mercies that have been showered upon them. Accept our thanks for all thy goodness to us as individuals. We are conscious that thou hast thought of us; that thou knowest each of us; that thou knowest our frame; and that thou hast been a Father, pitying his children.

Now, for our own sakes, for the sake of our households, in behalf of the State in which we dwell, of this nation of which we are a part, of all the struggling nations on the globe, of mankind throughout the world, we desire, O Lord our God, to lift up our voice of thanksgiving and of praise. Thine is nature; and all her fruits are thy gifts. Thine are the seasons; and whatever they have brought forth are of God. If throughout the earth, on the sea, in the forest, upon the plain, on the mountain-side, in the valley, and among all nations, there has been, during the year, a harvest of joy and prosperity, it is thy doing. And we pray that we, together with all who are joined with us, may remember this with gratitude, and render thanks to God for all his goodness.

We commend ourselves to thy care in the time to come. Bless this nation. Hold it back from all violence. Keep it from intestine factions, and from corruption. Make all our magistrates pure, and the administration of justice prompt, so that men may understand the laws of the land, and respect them, and obey them.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt deliver us from marring our prosperity by a bad example. Let it be ours to stand before the nations of the earth with such self-restraint, with such patience toward those who are weak, with such conceptions of the nobility of the understanding and the reason rather than of power, that all men may love liberty, and may suspect and know the source from which our liberty comes—even that liberty with which Christ makes his people free.

We pray for all that are enslaved in superstition, in ignorance, in bonds of any kind; for all that are exiled; for all that are suffering, whether justly for their sins, or for that which they could not avoid; for all that are in prisons; for all that are in hospitals; for all that have no homes to-day; for all for whom no fire is lighted; for all whose table doth not bear bounty but starvation.

We beseech of thee, O God, that thou wilt look upon all classes and conditions of men. May our hands be open and our hearts warm to succor those who need our help. We pray that while we live we may serve thee; and when we can do no more service, may we not tarry as exiles on frigid soil: may we begin again with a new spring, to bud and blossom in a better existence.

And to thy name shall be the praise forever and forever. *Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR Father, we pray for thy blessing upon the word spoken. Give us grateful hearts as we look into the tendencies of the history of things in the world. Thou God of thy people, thou Shepherd of those who wander in the wilderness—thou wilt guide us in all the uncertain ways in which we are called to walk, and art guiding us. Into thy hand we commit the helm. Why should we be burdened and anxious with care? Thou art the Leader, and we will follow thee. We know thy heart. We know that its nature is to love. We know that thy love is a love which is willing to suffer. We know that all doles and charities without love are worthless as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. We ask for that love that works the regeneration of the soul, purity, sweetness, all forms of power, and that rays itself out, so that, as flowers are a thousand times larger by their fragrance than by their form, we may be larger by our manhood than by our personality. And grant that for all the blessings which we have received and are receiving at thy hands, we may be thankful on earth, and more thankful in thy heavenly kingdom. We ask it through riches of grace in our dear Lord. *Amen.*

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